

# Car seat safety

## Information for parents in the Pediatric areas

### Your child's safety depends on you!

1. Choose a car seat that is safe for your child.
2. Learn to install it correctly in your vehicle.
3. Secure your child in a safe car seat every time he or she rides in a vehicle.

### Types of car seats

You need a car seat that is right for your child's weight, height and age. As your child grows you will need to use different types of car seats.

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| Over 80 lb (36 kg)<br>or over 4'9" (145 cm)<br>or over 8 years of age | Regular seat belt       |
| 40 to 80 lb<br>(18 to 36 kg)  | Booster seat            |
| 22 to 40 lb<br>(10 to 18 kg) and can walk unassisted                  | Forward facing car seat |
| Newborn up to 22lb<br>(10 kg) and at least 1 year of age              | Rear facing car seat    |

Child in **forward facing** car seat



Baby in **rear facing** car seat

Some car seats can be used in 2 or 3 ways. For more information about the different types of car seats, see the list of resources on page 4.

## Choosing a safe car seat

To decide which car seat is right for your child: read the owner's manual for your vehicle and the car seat manufacturer's instructions, and look over the car seat carefully.

### What to check for:

- The car seat must have a Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS) label.
- The weight and height limits match your child's size.
- The car seat can be used with your vehicle.
- The expiry date will not pass during the time you will use the car seat. Never use a car seat after the expiry date has passed.
- The car seat has all its parts. Nothing is cracked, ripped or broken. Never use a car seat that has been in a car crash, even a minor one.
- The car seat has not been recalled. Call the manufacturer (the phone number is on the car seat) or check Transport Canada's public notices for recalls (1-800-333-0371 or [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)).



If you buy a car seat, fill out and mail the registration card that comes with the car seat. If the car seat is recalled, the company can contact you.

## Installing the car seat correctly

- Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions and the owner's manual for your vehicle. If you don't have the car seat's instructions, call the manufacturer for a copy (the phone number will be on the car seat) or check their website.
- Install the car seat in the middle of the back seat. This is the safest place for all children under 13 years of age. Your child should never sit in front of an airbag.
- You can have your car seat checked to make sure it is installed correctly in your vehicle. Call your local public health unit and ask about car seat clinics in your area. In Hamilton, call Health Connections at 905-546-3550.

## Securing your child in the car seat

**All car seats are different.  
Follow the instructions that come with your car seat.**

- Dress your child in clothes that allow the harness strap to fit between the legs. Do not wrap your child in a blanket or use a bunting bag.
- Put the carry handle of the car seat in the locked down position for traveling.
- Put your child in the car seat. Make sure your child's back and bottom are up against the seat.
- Put the harness over your child's shoulders. The harness should be snug. Just one finger should fit between the harness and your child's collarbone. The harness straps should attach to the seat near your child's shoulders.
- Check that the chest clip is at your child's armpit level.
- Secure the car seat tightly in the vehicle (some car seats snap into a base that is secured to the vehicle). Follow the instructions for the car seat and for your vehicle. Tighten the lap and shoulder belts as much as possible.
- After your child is buckled into the car seat and it is secured in the vehicle, you can put a blanket over your child if needed. You don't want your child to get too hot.
- If your child needs a portable oxygen tank or other equipment, anchor the equipment to the floor of the vehicle or under the seat.

## Traveling with your child

- Never leave your child alone in a vehicle.
- If possible, have an adult sit in the back seat to watch your child.
- Use the car seat for travel only. After the car ride, take your child out of the car seat, even if he or she is sleeping.
- Limit the time your child spends in the car seat. During long trips, take a break every couple of hours and take your child out of the car seat.

### Car seat testing

If your child was preterm or has breathing problems, he or she will need a car seat test before going home.

This is a test to see if your child:

- has any breathing problems while in his or her car seat, or
- needs special positioning to travel safely in the car seat.

The test will be done in your child's car seat. You will need to assemble your car seat and bring it to the hospital, including the base if it has one.

Your nurse will give you more information about "Car seat testing".

### For more information

- Call your local Public Health Unit – ask about Car Seat Clinics in your area. If you live in Hamilton, call Health Connections at 905-546-3550.
- Call Service Ontario at 1-800-268-4686 or visit the Ontario Ministry of Transportation website:  
[www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/carseat/choose.shtml](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/carseat/choose.shtml)
- Transport Canada – call 1-800-333-0371 or visit:  
[www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/safedrivers-childsafety-car-index-873.htm](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/safedrivers-childsafety-car-index-873.htm)
- Parachute (formerly Safe Kids Canada) – visit:  
[www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/topic/C2](http://www.parachutecanada.org/injury-topics/topic/C2)

You are welcome to use the computer in the Ronald McDonald Family Room. Free internet access is also available in your local public library.